

## IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1-2, 4-6, 11-12, 14, 23, 30, 37, and 41-42. A copy of all claims now pending follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for handling database requests for client systems over a network, the method comprising:  
receiving from a client a database request via a request handler;  
determining an assigned database server for handling the database request from a group of available database servers;  
prompting the assigned database server to load a database corresponding to the database request;  
~~providing the database request to the assigned database server for handling the database request; and~~  
~~providing a result of handling the database request to the client~~  
providing information regarding the assigned database server to the request handler to allow the request handler to provide the database request to the assigned database server for handling the database request.
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~further comprising wherein~~  
determining the assigned database server for handling the database request from the group of available database servers further comprises:  
determining that the database request is a request to create a database;  
generating a database identifier for the database; and  
mapping the database to the assigned database server using the database identifier.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:  
receiving a subsequent database request containing the database identifier;

using the database identifier to determine the assigned database server; and  
providing the subsequent database request to the assigned database server for handling  
the subsequent database request.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~further comprising wherein~~  
determining the assigned database server for handling the database request from the group of  
available database servers further comprises:

responsive to determining that there is no database server assigned to handle the  
database request[[,]] ;  
assigning a selected database server from the group of available database servers as the  
assigned database server; and  
updating a mapping of previously created databases to their respective database servers  
to include the assignment of the selected database server to the database.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
responsive to a failure in the handling of the database request by the assigned database  
server[[,]] ;  
assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the group  
of available database servers; and  
providing the database request to the alternative database server for handling the  
database request.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
responsive to an elapsed time for the handling of the database request by the assigned  
database server exceeding a threshold[[,]] ;  
instructing the assigned database server to terminate the handling of the database  
request;

assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the group of available database servers; and  
providing the database request to the alternative database server for handling the database request.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
maintaining location information for a plurality of request making clients corresponding to a particular database associated with the database request;  
assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the group of available database servers by analyzing the location information for the plurality of request making clients; and  
providing the database request to the alternative database server for handling the database request.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the alternative database server is assigned based upon a determination that a substantial number of the request making clients are located closer to the alternative database server than the assigned database server.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the group of available database servers, based upon a comparison of a first expected load on the assigned database server and a second expected load on the alternative database server.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the group of available database servers; and

providing the database request to the alternative database server for handling the database request.

11. (Currently Amended) A system for handling database requests for client systems over a network, the system comprising:  
a request handling module, which receives from a client a database request;  
a plurality of database servers, which receive and handle database requests; and  
a master control module, in communication with the request handling module and the plurality of database servers, which receives the database request, determines an assigned database server from the plurality of database servers for handling the database request, prompts the assigned database server to load a database corresponding to the database request, ~~whereby the database request is provided to the assigned database server for handling and a result of handling the database request is provided to the client~~ and provides information regarding the assigned database server to the request handling module to allow the request handling module to provide the database request to the assigned database server.

12. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein the master control module determines the assigned database server from the plurality of database servers by determining that the database request is a request to create a database, ~~generates~~ generating a database identifier for the database, and ~~maps~~ mapping the database to the assigned database server using the database identifier.

13. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the master control module receives a subsequent database request containing the database identifier, uses the database identifier to

determine the assigned database server, and provides the subsequent database request to the assigned database server for handling the subsequent database request.

14. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein the master control module determines the assigned database server from the plurality of database servers by ~~responds to~~ determining that there is no database server assigned to handle the database request, ~~by~~ assigning a selected database server from the plurality of database servers as the assigned database server, and updating a mapping of previously created databases to their respective database servers to include the assignment of the selected database server to the database.

15. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the master control module responds to a failure in handling the database request by the assigned database server by assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers, and identifying the alternative database server to the request handler responsive to the database request.

16. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the master control module assigns the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers, and identifies the alternative database server to the request handler responsive to the database request.

17. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the request handler responds to an elapsed time for handling the database request by the assigned database server exceeding a threshold by instructing the assigned database server to terminate the handling of the database request, and wherein the master control module then assigns the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers.

18. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the master control module maintains location information for a plurality of request making clients corresponding to a particular database associated with the database request, and assigns the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers by analyzing the location information for the plurality of request making clients.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the alternative database server is assigned based upon a determination that a substantial number of the request making clients are located closer to the alternative database server than the assigned database server.

20. (Original) The system of claim 11, wherein the master control module assigns the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers, based upon a comparison of a first expected load on the assigned database server and a second expected load on the alternative database server.

21. (Original) A method for handling database requests for client systems over a network, the method comprising:

communicating with a plurality of database servers that receive and handle database requests;

assigning databases to the database servers, including an assignment of a previously existing database to an assigned database server selected from the plurality of database servers;

receiving a set of information about a database request from a request handler;

determining from the set of information that the assigned database server corresponds to the database request; and

sending an identification of the assigned database server to the request handler.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the set of information about the database request includes a database identifier for the previously existing database, and the database identifier is used to determine that the previously existing database corresponds to the assigned database server.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, ~~further comprising~~ wherein determining the assigned database server for handling the database request from the group of available database servers further comprises:

responsive to determining that the previously existing database is not currently assigned to a database server[[,]] ;

assigning a selected database server from the plurality of database servers as the assigned database server; and

updating a mapping that correlates previously created databases to their respective database servers to include the assignment of the selected database server to the database identifier.

24. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers, and identifying the alternative database server to the request handler.

25. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

maintaining location information for a plurality of request making clients corresponding to the previously existing database; and

assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers by analyzing the location information for the plurality of request making clients.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the alternative database server is assigned based upon a determination that a substantial number of the plurality of request making clients are located closer to the alternative database server than the assigned database server.

27. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising:  
assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers, based upon a comparison of a first expected load on the assigned database server and a second expected load on the alternative database server.

28. (Original) An apparatus for handling database requests for client systems over a network, the apparatus comprising:

a database server managing module, for communicating with a plurality of database servers that receive and handle database requests, assigning databases to the database servers, including an assignment of a previously existing database to an assigned database server selected from the plurality of database servers, and determining that an assigned database server corresponds to a database by examining a set of information about the database request; and

a request handler communications module, for receiving the set of information about the database request from a request handler, and sending an identification of the assigned database server to the request handler.

29. (Original) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the set of information about the database request includes a database identifier for the previously existing database, and the database identifier is used to determine that the previously existing database corresponds to the assigned database server.



30. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the database server managing module determines the assigned database server from the plurality of database servers by ~~responds to~~ determining that the previously existing database is not currently assigned to a database server, ~~by~~ assigning a selected database server from the plurality of database servers as the assigned database server, and updating a set of database identifiers that correlate previously created databases to their respective database servers to include the assignment of the selected database server to the database identifier.

31. (Original) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the database server managing module assigns the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers, and identifies the alternative database server to the request handler.

32. (Original) The apparatus of claim 28, further comprising:

a database assignment module, in communication with the database server managing module, which maintains location information for a plurality of request making clients corresponding to a particular database, and assigns the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers by analyzing the location information for the plurality of request making clients.

33. (Original) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the alternative database server is assigned based upon a determination that a substantial number of the request making clients are located closer to the alternative database server than the assigned database server.

34. (Original) The apparatus of claim 28, further comprising:

a database assignment module, in communication with the database server managing module, which assigns the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers, based upon a comparison of a first expected load on the assigned database server and a second expected load on the alternative database server.

35. (Original) A computer program product, for handling database requests for client systems over a network, the computer program product stored on a computer readable medium and adapted to perform operations comprising:

communicating with a plurality of database servers that receive and handle database requests;

assigning databases to the database servers, including an assignment of a previously existing database to an assigned database server selected from the plurality of database servers;

receiving a set of information about a database request from a request handler;

determining from the set of information that the assigned database server corresponds to the database request; and

sending an identification of the assigned database server to the request handler.

36. (Original) The computer program product of claim 35, wherein the set of information about the database request includes a database identifier for the previously existing database, and the database identifier is used to determine that the previously existing database corresponds to the assigned database server.

37. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 35, ~~wherein the operations further comprise~~ wherein determining the assigned database server for handling the database request from the group of available database servers further comprises :

responsive to determining that the previously existing database is not currently assigned to a database server[[]] ;

assigning a selected database server from the plurality of database servers as the assigned database server; and  
updating a persistent set of database identifiers that correlate previously created databases to their respective database servers to include the assignment of the selected database server to the database identifier.

38. (Original) The computer program product of claim 35, wherein the operations further comprise:

assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers, and identifying the alternative database server to the request handler.

39. (Original) The computer program product of claim 35, wherein the operations further comprise:

maintaining location information for a plurality of request making clients corresponding to the previously existing database; and

assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers by analyzing the location information for the plurality of request making clients.

40. (Original) The computer program product of claim 39, wherein the alternative database server is assigned based upon a determination that a substantial number of the plurality of request making clients are located closer to the alternative database server than the assigned database server.

41. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 35, wherein the operations further comprise:

assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers, based upon a comparison of a first expected load on the ~~1 assigned~~ assigned database server and a second expected load on the alternative database server.

42. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim ~~41~~ 35, ~~wherein the alternative database server is assigned based upon a failure in handling the database request by the assigned database server~~ wherein the operations further comprise:  
assigning the database request to an alternative database server selected from the plurality of database servers based upon a failure in handling the database request by the assigned database server.